

Shaker Church Family Square House
(Shaker Shadrach Ireland House)
E. side of Shaker Road, 1 mi. S. of
State Rt. 2A, approx. 2 mi. W. of
Worcester-Middlesex County line
Harvard
Worcester County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-804

HABS
MASS
14-HARV
6-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. MASS-804

SHAKER CHURCH FAMILY SQUARE HOUSE
(SHADRACH IRELAND HOUSE)HABS
MASS
14-HARV
6-

Location: East side of Shaker Road, 1 mile south of State Rt. 2A, approximately 2 miles west of Worcester-Middlesex County line, Harvard, Worcester County, Massachusetts

Present Owner and Occupant: Edward R. and Amy B. Squibb

Present Use: Residence

Statement of Significance: This building was originally the dwelling of Shadrach Ireland and his "New Light" followers. It then became the early headquarters for the Shaker movement in Harvard, Massachusetts. It was used as both a dwelling house and a meetinghouse by the Shakers, 1782-1792, then as a dwelling until the sale of the Shaker holdings in 1918. This structure is an early and important communal building.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1769. (Henry S. Nourse, "History of the Town of Harvard, 1732-1893," printed for Warren Hapgood in Harvard, 1894.)
2. Architect, builder and suppliers: Shadrach Ireland.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Shadrach Ireland and his "New Light" group built the house. Upon his death, in 1780, the house went to his followers. In 1782, Jonathan Ireland, Elizabeth Ireland, Martha Davis, Thomas Robbins, and Tabitha Robbins deeded the house and farm, eighty-six and a half acres, in consideration of \$1,686.67 to Aaron Jewett and others, who as trustees, represented the Harvard Shakers. In 1918, the Shakers sold the property to Fiske Warren of Harvard, who incorporated it into his single-tax Tahanto Enclave with Mrs. Coxeter as tenant. The building was then sold to Edward Witte in 1930 and then to the present owners Edward R. and Amy B. Squibb in 1956.
4. Original plans and construction: No plans are known to exist. Much of the construction was said to have been done at night to avoid the curiosity of the townspeople (Henry S. Nourse, "History of the Town of Harvard, 1732-1893," printed for Warren Hapgood in Harvard, 1894.)

5. Alterations and additions: The house originally had a hipped roof, which was changed in 1845 to the present gabled form and the early wood shingles were replaced with slate. Photographs taken in the early 1900's show a storm enclosure at the front door. A 20 foot x 20 foot north wing was added probably sometime after the Warren ownership. The front door pediment is a later change and the interiors have been altered somewhat, but not extensively.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

This building was the home of Shadrach Ireland and his "New Light" followers in Harvard. Ireland was a preacher who began a religious revival in the Harvard area. He claimed to be the second Messiah and advocated doctrines similar to those of the Shakers. This was the place of Shadrach Ireland's death and alleged temporary burial place. This was also the scene of a visit of Mother Ann Lee in 1781, which led to the recruitment of the Shaker group in Harvard. One of the reasons that the Shakers established themselves in this building was to convert Ireland's followers. This building became the scene of early Shaker meetings, dances, etc., at which mobs of townspeople ridiculed, provoked, and in some cases beat the Shakers. The march which was marked by the beating of Father William Whitaker and William Lee in Harvard began with a raid on the Square House. Mother Ann Lee often visited here during these days.

C. Sources of Information:

The building is shown on a plan of the Harvard First Family delineated by George Kendall in July, 1836; the original is located at the Fruitlands Museum, Harvard, Massachusetts and a copy is available in the HABS collection at the Library of Congress. There is a colored photo post card published by Berton Williams, Ayer, Massachusetts. There are three 8" x 10" black and white photographs taken by Clara Endicott Sears in 1916 showing three views of the house. Both the post card and the photographs are now at the Fruitlands Museum, Harvard, Massachusetts. There is a photograph on page 2 in "Gleanings from Old Shaker Journals," by Clara Endicott Sears, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916.

Prepared by Bayard Underwood, AIA
Shakerton Foundation, Inc.
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